



Connecticut Department of Energy
and Environmental Protection

FUNDING OPPORTUNITY ANNOUNCEMENT

REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS (RFA)

Sustainable Materials Management Grant Program

September 21, 2021

The Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) is pleased to announce the availability of grant funding and technical assistance for Connecticut municipalities and regions through the Sustainable Materials Management (SMM) Grant program, pursuant to Public Act, Spec. Sess., June 2021, No. 21-2, § 308. The Public Act authorized \$5 million in total; we are anticipating approximately \$0.7 million for technical assistance to support municipalities and businesses and will have the remaining up to \$4.3 million potentially available for the SMM Grants Program.

DEEP invites proposals seeking grant funds to help municipalities and regional waste authorities initiate and scale up Unit-Based Pricing (UBP) and food scrap collection efforts. CT DEEP will also provide technical assistance through a contracted service provider to assist during the application process in development of a long-term strategy pursuant to Spec. Sess. P.A. 21-2, § 308.

UBP and food scrap collection programs are highly effective solid waste management solutions that will help reduce costs and environmental impacts associated with municipal solid waste (MSW) disposal, especially when the programs are implemented together. Supporting municipalities that want to pursue these strategies will help to alleviate the state's waste disposal crisis by reducing the amount of MSW tonnage that may be disposed of at out-of-state landfills as in-state waste-to-energy capacity declines. These strategies also help to advance the statewide 60% diversion rate set forth in the [Comprehensive Materials Management Strategy](#) (CMMS).

Project proposals must include long-term implementation strategies for sustained waste reduction and diversion. Preference will be given to projects with potential for the largest volume of waste reduction in a short timeframe. This RFA is posted to DEEP's [Municipal and Regional Grants and Technical Assistance webpage](#).

Please read through this Request for Applications (RFA) in its entirety.

1. OVERVIEW

Connecticut is facing a waste disposal crisis as traditional options for the disposal of MSW diminish. Five waste-to-energy (WTE) facilities in the state currently manage the majority of the 2.4 million tons of MSW that is disposed each year. One of these facilities, the Materials Innovation and Recycling Authority (MIRA) waste-to-energy facility in Hartford, is aging and has indicated it will likely cease operation by July 1, 2022, significantly reducing in-state waste disposal capacity. Many businesses and municipalities are increasingly relying on export of MSW to out-of-state landfills for waste disposal. With fewer and aging WTE disposal options in the state, residents and municipal leaders can expect tipping fees to increase at

the remaining in-state WTE facilities, along with increasing transportation and disposal rates for out-of-state waste-to-energy facilities and landfills. Disposal capacity in Northeast landfills may decline as much as 40% by 2026. Landfilling also exposes business and towns to unpredictable cost increases as they compete for transportation and disposal capacity as well as potential long-term liability if a landfill has a release, is mismanaged or is otherwise a source of pollution in the future.

In response to this waste crisis, DEEP is engaging with business and municipal leaders, regional waste authorities, legislators, environmental and environmental justice advocates, and other stakeholders to advance programs and policies that can help address this waste disposal crisis by reducing or diverting MSW tonnage from disposal. In August 2020, the [Connecticut Coalition for Sustainable Materials Management \(CCSMM\)](#), a partnership between over 80 municipalities and DEEP, identified a [Menu of Options](#) to help reduce MSW disposal. The CCSMM highlighted UBP and food scrap collection programs as leading options for significantly reducing MSW disposal.

2. CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

The Sustainable Materials Management (SMM) Grant program will advance significant reduction in MSW disposal by supporting the initiation and/or scale-up of UBP and food scrap diversion efforts. Both UBP and food scrap diversion projects deliver significant tip fee savings and environmental benefits when implemented at scale with broad participation, and may benefit from investment and financial support in the initial stages of implementation to cover costs such as: technical assistance for project design; education and outreach materials to ensure public awareness and participation; bags or carts free of charge for a limited time to encourage participation; and subsidy for transportation costs during the startup phase of UBP or food scrap collection projects.

DEEP is seeking proposals for grant funding to support the implementation of UBP and/or food scrap diversion projects to enable them to become self-sustaining and reach permanent, full-scale deployment and municipal/regional-wide participation. The SMM Grant program will provide funding and technical assistance through a contracted service provider, pursuant Spec. Sess. P.A. 21-2, § 308. DEEP reserves the right to provide additional funding, pursuant to this RFA, as resources are available.

2.1. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

To be eligible for SMM Grant funding, Applicant must be a Connecticut municipality, a group of Connecticut municipalities, or a Connecticut regional entity (council of governments, regional planning agencies, resource recovery authority, recycling operating committees, or other entity representing Connecticut municipalities).

Municipal applicants are encouraged, but not required, to join the [Connecticut Coalition for Sustainable Materials Management](#), which makes available information, resources, technical assistance and networking for municipal members. Municipal applicants are also encouraged, but not required, to participate in [SustainableCT](#) to take advantage of additional sustainable materials management support, resources, and funding.

2.2. ELIGIBLE PROPOSALS

Eligible proposals will support adoption of UBP and/or food scrap collection programs that contribute to reducing MSW disposal and increasing diversion of organic materials.

- **Unit-Based Pricing** (or pay-as-you-throw) programs incentivize residents to recycle more and generate less waste by charging residents a variable (i.e., volumetric) price for the collection and disposal of municipal solid waste based on the amount of material they throw away, rather than charging a fixed or flat fee for waste disposal. UBP programs can be implemented in a variety of ways, including cart-based, bag-based, or as a hybrid project. For more information on UBP programs, see the [CCSMM UBP Working Group website](#) and the [CCSMM Menu of Options](#) (pages 39-42).
- **Food Scraps collection programs** divert food waste from disposal most effectively when implemented in conjunction with a UBP strategy. Food scraps may be diverted through source separation, collection, and transportation to anaerobic digesters, commercial compost facilities, and other organics processing facilities. Food scrap collection can include both curbside collection and co-collection (where residents segregate their food scraps in designated, colored bags and place them in their trash bin for pickup). Organic material makes up approximately 33% of the residential waste stream, including food scraps (22%) and other organics (11%), and if diverted at scale can significantly reduce MSW disposal tonnage. For more information on food scrap and organics collection options see the [CCSMM Food Scraps and Organics Working Group website](#) and the [CCSMM Menu of Options](#) (pages 12-23).

UBP and food scrap diversion programs are natural complements to one another. UBP programs are proven to increase participation in voluntary food scrap collection by creating an incentive for residents to participate in order to lower their MSW generation. UBP programs also generate savings on waste disposal costs, which can help to offset any incremental costs of food scrap collection.

With the support of DEEP's contracted technical assistance provider, eligible proposals must include a strategy for achieving full adoption and/or participation in the UBP program (immediate or over time), to ensure that projects funded by the SMM Grant can achieve cost savings, become self-sustaining, and become permanent over time. Pilot or demonstration proposals limited to a geographic area or a short-term duration must clearly demonstrate how the initial project will lead to permanent, municipal/region-wide implementation.

UBP and food scrap collection grant proposals should be designed to fit the requirements of the communities they serve, whether they provide for MSW disposal through municipal or contract curbside collection, subscription collection, or residential drop-off at a transfer station. Proposals for UBP programs may include programs that utilize cart-based, bag-based, and hybrid approaches. Food scrap collection grant proposals may be implemented through curbside collection of food scraps through dedicated routes, or co-collection of food scraps segregated in separate bags and collected in the trash bin with MSW. Food scrap collection is most effective and economically sustainable when paired with UBP.

Eligible Expenses

The following are examples of eligible expenses under the SMM Grants program (including but not limited to):

- Outreach and education for implementation of UBP and food scrap programs

- Providing free or subsidized bags for the startup phase of a UBP program
- Purchase and installation of truck cameras or other equipment to support enforcement of UBP
- Transportation costs for startup phase of curbside food waste collection
- Residential and curbside collection carts for
 - MSW (approx. 32 or 48 gallons only)
 - Recycling (approx. 64 or 96 gallons only, and if MSW is smaller than 64 gallons)
 - Food scraps for curbside collection
- Recycling and/or enforcement coordinator salary, or project-based temporary staffing
- Pre-approved site improvements to a co-collection program sorting site such as signage, PPE/safety station, sort area barriers, scales, specialized collection/containment containers
- Containers to support transfer station or satellite drop-off program for food scraps
- Infrastructure (such as establishing food scrap satellite collection locations, carts, bags, sorting facilities, composting facilities, etc.)
- Pop-up hoop building or other temporary structures for hand sorting of source separated food scraps from MSW
- Organics collection vehicle for municipal fleet only
- Administrative costs approved by DEEP to be prudent and reasonable for project implementation

Funds are not to be used for achieving compliance with state recycling laws and regulations.

3. SUBMISSION PROCESS

3.1. PHASE ONE: EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

To receive funding under the SMM Grant program, applicants must first submit an Expression of Interest Microsoft Word fillable form to DEEP (refer to timeline in 3.3 below), outlining the proposal parameters and providing basic information to DEEP. The Expression of Interest will request a narrative to include details on your proposed program, whether program will be implemented on a pilot or permanent basis, your partners to implement proposed program, details on the how the grant will assist you in establishing a scaled-up, economically self-sustaining program over time, and what level of funding is requested for your proposal. This RFA and direct links to the Expression of Interest Form can be found on DEEP's [Municipal and Regional Grants and Technical Assistance webpage](#). Applicants may submit more than one Expression of Interest form and may join Expressions of Interest forms submitted by other applicants.

Expression of Interest Evaluation and Review Criteria

Expressions of Interest as part of Phase One of the process will be reviewed for completeness, and to determine if the proposal satisfies the minimum program requirements. All applicants will be notified in writing, regarding the status of their Expression of Interest following DEEP's review. Notification may include approval, request for additional information, deferred action, or denial.

DEEP Staff will evaluate the Expressions of Interest and select proposals to move forward to Phase 2 based on the following Review Criteria:

1. Eligibility of applicant and proposal (see Sections 2.1 and 2.2)
2. Consistency with the [CCSMM Menu of Options](#) and the [CMMS](#)
3. Overall potential impact of the proposal on waste reduction and diversion and short timeframe
4. Availability of grant funding

3.2. PHASE TWO: APPLICATION

In Phase 2, applicants will meet individually with DEEP's technical assistance contractor and DEEP staff to discuss and refine their proposal and develop an application. DEEP's Solid Waste Permitting group will work with applicant during the technical assistance process to identify and facilitate any permitting/authorization requirements.

Applicants may modify their proposal from the Expression of Interest form, such as by adding additional partners and co-applicants. Submission of complete and accurate information will enhance the possibility of the application being selected for funding.

Application Evaluation and Review Criteria

Applications submitted as part of Phase Two will be reviewed for detailed information regarding project viability and ability to execute project in a timely manner. DEEP shall evaluate the application based on projected costs of the project, potential for waste reduction and diversion, support from key stakeholders, final estimated of number of residents targeted for participation and other criteria. Please see complete list of Review Criteria below.

Grants shall be awarded only to applicants based on meeting the Review Criteria and subject to the Commissioner's discretion. All applicants will be notified in writing regarding the status of their grant application following DEEP's review. Notification may include approval, request for additional information, deferred action, or denial. Proposals that do not meet the minimum program requirements may be disqualified from further review and evaluation.

The Phase 2 Application will be provided to those applicants that have submitted the Phase 1 Expression of Interest form and meet with DEEP staff and the technical assistance contractor.

Grant funds will be awarded on a first-come, first-served basis while funding is available.

Applications will be evaluated and ultimately selected based upon the following Review Criteria:

1. Overall potential impact of the proposal on waste reduction and diversion for the municipality.
2. Long-term economic sustainability of the program including funding and resource availability after the grant runs out (i.e., UBP-related cost savings helps pay for food scrap collection).
3. Strategy for scaling up to full municipality-wide implementation. For food scrap collection proposals, detailed description of full-scale residential participation including implementation of a UBP strategy.
4. Strength of education and promotion strategy.
5. Progress in planning or implementation of UBP or food waste program to date and demonstrated support from key stakeholders.
6. Measures of success for the program and description of evaluation approach.
7. Detailed description of proposed budget to implement UBP and/or food waste program.
8. Timeline for implementation of the program.
9. As applicable, the extent to which the program would be matched by other sources of revenue or municipal services.

10. Municipalities identified in proposal are compliant or actively working towards compliance with all applicable recycling and waste related laws and regulations.
11. Preference will be given to applications for a multi-town and/or regional project.
12. Preference will be given to implementation of permanent programs (over pilot or demonstration projects) and maximum number of households engaged.
13. For those applicants who have previously received funding through the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, past performance will be a factor considered in the approval process.
14. Environmental compliance history using CGS Section 22a-6m as a proxy with other applicable environmental regulations or statutes may impact eligibility.

Evaluation of the proposals will weight the criteria in the following manner:

Review Criteria	Weighted Percentage
Criteria 1 – 3	60%
Criteria 4 – 8	25%
Criteria 9 – 14	15%
Total	100%

3.3. SCHEDULE & DEADLINES

CT DEEP reserves the right to postpone or reschedule any of the actual or proposed deadlines.

	Event	Applicable Schedule/Deadline
Phase 1	Request for Applications (RFA) issued	September 21, 2021
	SMM Grant Information Session	September 28, 2021
	Questions pertaining to this RFA may be submitted any time to DEEP.RecyclingProgram@ct.gov	Ongoing
	Applicants should submit any questions regarding the Expression of Interest to DEEP.RecyclingProgram@ct.gov	Questions must be submitted by October 5, 2021
	DEEP posts answers to any questions received about the Expression of Interest	Answers will be posted on the SMM Grant website by October 19, 2021
	Applicants submit an Expression of Interest	Encourage submission of Expression of Interest as soon as possible, but <u>no later than October 29, 2021 at 11:59 PM EST</u>
Phase 2	Applicants informed about whether they will move to Phase 2	On or before November 16, 2021
	Applicants selected to move forward to Phase 2 will meet with DEEP Staff and Technical Consultant, refine their proposal, and develop SMM Grant Application.	ASAP after being informed of moving on to Phase 2
	Application Forms accepted and reviewed on an ongoing basis.	Applicants will be given a deadline for submission of the application following the meeting with the technical assistance

		contractor. Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis. Applications will be reviewed and awarded on a first-come first-served basis for as long as funds are available.
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4. IMPLEMENTATION AND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

4.1 AWARDS

Technical assistance will be available to applicants through DEEP’s Technical Assistance Contractor to develop baseline, analyses, and program design along with blueprint for town approval, stakeholder outreach and education and implementation.

Approved projects will receive awards in the form of a contract, and reimbursable work may not proceed until such time as the contract is fully executed.

Municipality/region will be required to begin the program within 60 days of executed contract or any funds awarded will be refunded to DEEP. The recipient will have one year to use allocated funding, and all reports and documentation of actions must be submitted to DEEP prior to final disbursements of any award(s)/retainages. Final request for reimbursement must be no later than 90 days following the expiration of the date of the grant contract.

Any municipality receiving an award that is not in compliance with the following will be expected to actively work towards compliance within the first few months of being awarded a grant.

1. C.G.S Sec. 22a-241j equitable collection requirement that municipalities offering curbside collection of MSW must also provide curbside collection of recyclables. Size of recycling collection containers must be equal to or greater than MSW containers and large enough to contain the volume of recyclables that are generated at each household.
2. C.G.S Sec. 22a-241j requirement that collectors include recycling collection charges integrated in the charge for solid waste collection (i.e., one bundled price for trash and recycling collection). This applies to private collectors operating within the municipality.
3. Relevant DEEP solid waste and recycling reporting requirements (Annual Municipal Recycling Report, Municipal Transfer Station Quarterly Reports, etc.)
4. CGS Section 22a- 220a(d)(1) requirement that municipality registers haulers.

4.2 REPORTING

Applicant agrees to provide timely progress reports on the proposed program during the duration of the award program which shall include, but not be limited to:

1. A description of milestones achieved and any challenges to the program implementation, detailing how such challenges were resolved.
2. Pre- and post-program implementation measurable criteria such as tonnages disposed and diverted, costs, and participation

Such progress reports shall be submitted on a monthly basis for first 3-6 months then annually thereafter, unless otherwise requested by the Commissioner.

5. OTHER

5.1 INQUIRY PROCEDURES

Applicants may reach out to DEEP.RecyclingProgram@ct.gov with questions about the RFA.

5.2 CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

Applicants are advised not to include in their proposals any proprietary information. The Connecticut Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) generally requires the disclosure of documents in the possession of the State upon request of any person (Conn. Gen. Stat. sec. 1-200 et seq.). Certain categories of information may be protected from FOIA. However, such information must be identified as proprietary or confidential prior to its submission to DEEP. Both redacted and unredacted versions of the protected information must be submitted if required by the application. FOIA-protected information must be isolated from other material in the application and labeled "CONFIDENTIAL". With this submission of information claimed and labeled as confidential, you must also provide the legal basis for the confidentiality claim, describe what efforts have been taken to keep the information confidential, and provide whether the information sought to be protected has an independent economic value by not being readily known or provide the exemption under FOIA that is applicable to the information. With your legal support and reasonable justification for confidentiality as described herein, the Department is better equipped to safeguard your confidential information should it become the subject of a Connecticut Freedom of Information Act inquiry. Information deemed confidential will remain confidential until no longer deemed as such by the Department or the applicant withdraws the exemption for the information.

6. RESERVED RIGHTS OF THE STATE – DEEP / TERMS AND CONDITIONS

"Proposal" shall mean quotation, bid, offer, application, Expression of Interest, and/or services. Applicant shall also mean proposers, offerors, bidders, or any person, municipality or firm responding to the RFA.

Neither CT-DEEP, its staff, its representatives, nor any of its consultants or agents will be liable for any claims or damages resulting from the solicitation, collection, review or evaluation of responses to this RFA. The State-DEEP reserves the right to accept or reject any and all proposals, in whole or in part, to reserve the right to partner proposers, to waive any technical defects, irregularities, and omissions, and to give consideration to past performance of the Proposers where the interests of the State and State will be best served. DEEP reserves the right, for any reason and without prior notice, to supplement, amend or otherwise modify this RFA, or otherwise request additional information. The State-DEEP reserves the right to directly negotiate with any entity who submits a proposal in response to this RFA and to award a contract based upon those negotiations alone. The State reserves the right to request interviews of Applicants, discuss all project details, and to select and negotiate a preferred development proposal that is in the best interest of the State prior to final award.

The State-DEEP shall not be responsible, in any manner, for the costs associated with responses to the solicitation. The individual responses to this solicitation including all artwork, drawings, plans, photos, models, and narrative material shall become the sole property of the State-DEEP upon their receipt. The State-DEEP shall have the right to copy, reproduce, duplicate, publicize, or otherwise dispose of each response to this solicitation in any manner that the State chooses unless otherwise agreed upon, in advance, with the Applicant.

The RFA Is Not An Offer. Neither this RFA nor any subsequent discussions shall give rise to any

commitment on the part of the State-DEEP or confer any rights on any Applicant unless and until a contract is fully executed by the necessary parties. The contract document will supersede all prior negotiations, representations or agreements, alleged or made, between the parties. The State-DEEP shall assume no liability for costs incurred by the Applicant or for payment of services under the terms of the contract until the successful Proposer is notified that the contract has been accepted and approved by the Department and, if required, by the Attorney General's Office.